

AGING AND PALLIATIVE CARE CERTIFICATE FOR INTERFAITH CLERGY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible to participate in the Aging and Palliative Care Certificate for Interfaith Clergy?

This program is designed for clergy of all faith traditions, chaplains, religious educators, spiritual and lay leaders, and clergy-in-training/seminary students. A small number of individuals with other professional backgrounds have been accepted on a case-by-case basis.

How will this program advance my career?

Clergy are frequently called upon to assist congregants with issues around aging, serious illness, health issues affecting older adults, end-of-life care, and bereavement. Often, clergy lack the knowledge and skill base to effectively and comfortably discuss, guide, and advise congregants when these issues arise, especially in times of crisis. For example:

- Considering options that facilitate independent community living for as long as possible
- Assisting families to manage transitions of care, including difficult discussions about the option of long-term care
- Guiding discussions about advance care planning for serious illness and end-of-life care

Clergy will gain knowledge and skills to better assist older adults and their family members address these challenging concerns.

These skills are also transferable for clergy who seek career opportunities and growth in agencies that hire clergy as chaplains or spiritual advisors, including long-term care facilities, hospitals, hospices, community organizations, and others.

Can I participate in this program while I work full-time?

This flexible program is designed for working clergy and professionals. The courses are on-line and asynchronous, allowing participants to work on courses wherever they are (in the U.S. or internationally) and at whatever times work best for them. All lessons, discussions, and assignments can be flexibly scheduled around professional, family, and personal activities. In addition, our faculty schedule a limited number of sessions on Zoom to encourage live dialogue among faculty and students.

What is the roadmap for completing the Certificate Program?

This program can be completed within a year. Two courses will be offered for each 8-week "semester," with a short break between terms. We obtain guidance from an Advisory Council

to assure that courses are not scheduled around the busiest times for clergy. While it is most ideal for participants to progress at the recommended pace, participants may decide to move along at a slower pace, taking less than 2 classes during each semester and completing the certificate over two years.

What is the curriculum?

Participants will take 6 courses of 3-credits each, for a total of 18 graduate-level credits. The courses include:

- Basic Counseling with Individuals, Families and Groups
- Philosophical Foundations of the Helping Professions
- Social Gerontology
- Palliative Care: Social Work Practice with Serious Illness
- Coping with Loss
- Interfaith Perspectives on Aging

(Descriptions for each of these courses are at the end of this fact sheet.)

In addition, we schedule an annual conference on Spirituality Near the End of Life, to allow for workshops, networking, and personal meetings. This program is offered at nominal charge to participants in this program and is also open to all social workers and clergy.

Do I receive a recognized credential for completing this program?

Yes. The Aging and Palliative Care Certificate for Interfaith Clergy is accredited by the New York State Department of Education as a free-standing professional certificate for clergy.

Can I apply Certificate course credits to a Master's in Social Work (MSW) at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work-Yeshiva University?

Yes. With the exception of Basic Counseling, credit for certificate courses (5 courses/15 credits) may be applied towards an MSW degree at Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University. Graduates of the program can apply their credits to both the required courses and electives that comprise the 60-credit MSW degree. Students who complete the MSW program will be eligible for licensure as a mental health professional. If a student is interested in pursuing an MSW, it should be discussed with the director at the time of their application, or early in their program.

Can I receive credit for similar courses taken in other graduate/professional programs or Clinical Pastoral Education?

Students may be waived from taking one course in this program if they have taken a similar, graduate-level class at another accredited program. Students are asked to provide the syllabus for the class to be considered for waiver. Faculty will review the syllabus with the student and make a determination if the course is sufficiently similar to our course. This will be applied on a case by case basis.

Are these courses transferrable to other university/professional programs?

Each university program maintains its own standards for accepting credits earned outside their program. These credits may be applied at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work's MSW program. Students who wish to apply these credits at other schools of social work, or at Clinical Pastoral Education programs, should request guidance directly from these programs.

What are the tuition costs for attending this program?

For participants entering the Certificate Program in 2022-2023, tuition is \$810 per course (for each of 6 courses, for a total of \$4,860 for the entire program). For current clergy-in-training/seminary students, tuition is \$500 per course (for each of 6 courses, for a total of \$3,000 for the entire program).

How do I apply for the program?

A very brief application is available on our website. Applicants are also required to submit their CV/resume with their application.

Applicants should use this application fee waiver code when submitting their application:
yufe waiver

If I need to discuss the program further, I may reach out to:

Rabbi Liz Rolle, Program Coordinator, at liz.rolle@yu.edu

Lynn Levy, PhD, LMSW Assistant Director, at llevy1@yu.edu

Gary L. Stein, JD, MSW, Director, at glstein@yu.edu

Course Descriptions

Basic Counseling with Individuals, Families and Groups

Working with families and individuals on difficult life issues requires therapeutic skill. This course offers clergy the conceptual, practical, theoretical and ethical frameworks and foundations that inform counseling relationships.

Philosophical Foundations of the Helping Professions

The themes of this course provide a unique lens through which clinicians, educators and clergy members may develop their own philosophy of helping as they minister to their communities and spheres of influence at the critical and pivotal stage of later life. The content of this course will provide a spiritual, biblical and philosophical framework that can be uniquely applied to individuals at the later stages of life when individuals and families may confront illness, frailty, loss, and suffering.

Social Gerontology:

The world population is growing older at an unprecedented pace. By 2030 over 20 percent of the US population will be old. This demographic trend represents enormous challenges and opportunities for older adults, their families, communities and professionals. This course introduces clergy to the range of social services available to families, policies that will impact older adults, types of living arrangements families may experience, and how to navigate familial changes that accompany aging. In addition, clergy will be introduced to Alzheimer's disease and dementias that are of growing concern in caring for older adults.

Palliative Care - Social Work Practice with Serious Illness

This course provides a comprehensive study of issues related to palliative and end-of-life care. Palliative care, provided to individuals and their families from birth to old age, integrates an interdisciplinary approach to caring for individuals facing life-limiting and serious chronic illness. We also teach clergy how to work with older adults, families and communities and integrate medical, psychosocial, legal, ethical, and spiritual perspectives.

Coping with Loss

This class addresses loss as a phenomenon in the life cycle that all people experience. We explore the theoretical base for understanding and addressing the psychosocial aspects of loss, death and bereavement and examine how to strengthen the coping skills of grieving individuals, families and groups. We help clergy to integrate theory of loss and bereavement with ritual and religious practice that can be healing growth producing.

Interfaith Perspectives on Aging: A Multi-Faith Approach to Aging and Longevity

This course will explore and examine how various religious traditions approach the rapidly expanding multi-generational cohort of elders. We will examine some of the sociological, theological, and psycho-spiritual aspects of this new longevity revolution. We shall explore issues such as the new life stage of caregiver, ethical challenges emerging from medical

technology, and legislation. We will also explore new rituals that speak to life stages, as well as our own perceptions of what it means to minister to and experience aging in the 21st century.